

§ 115D-39. Student tuition and fees.

(a) The State Board of Community Colleges shall fix and regulate all tuition and fees charged to students for applying to or attending any institution pursuant to this Chapter.

The receipts from all student tuition and fees, other than student activity fees, shall be State funds and shall be deposited as provided by regulations of the State Board of Community Colleges.

The legal resident limitation with respect to tuition, set forth in G.S. 116-143.1 and G.S. 116-143.3, shall apply to students attending institutions operating pursuant to this Chapter; provided, however, that when an employer other than the Armed Forces, as that term is defined in G.S. 116-143.3, pays tuition for an employee to attend an institution operating pursuant to this Chapter and when the employee works at a North Carolina business location, the employer shall be charged the in-State tuition rate; provided further, however, a community college may charge in-State tuition to up to one percent (1%) of its out-of-state students, rounded up to the next whole number, to accommodate the families transferred by business, the families transferred by industry, or the civilian families transferred by the Armed Forces, consistent with the provisions of G.S. 116-143.3, into the State. Notwithstanding these requirements, a refugee who lawfully entered the United States and who is living in this State shall be deemed to qualify as a domiciliary of this State under G.S. 116-143.1(a)(1) and as a State resident for community college tuition purposes as defined in G.S. 116-143.1(a)(2). Also, a nonresident of the United States who has resided in North Carolina for a 12-month qualifying period and has filed an immigrant petition with the United States Immigration and Naturalization Service shall be considered a State resident for community college tuition purposes.

(a1) In addition, federal law enforcement officers, firefighters, EMS personnel, and rescue and lifesaving personnel whose permanent duty station is within North Carolina and who do not otherwise qualify for tuition waivers under G.S. 115D-5(b)(2a) shall also be eligible for the State resident community college tuition rate for courses that support their organizations' training needs and are approved for this purpose by the State Board of Community Colleges.

(b) In addition, any person lawfully admitted to the United States who satisfied the qualifications for assignment to a public school set out under G.S. 115C-366 and graduated from the public school to which the student was assigned shall also be eligible for the State resident community college tuition rate. This subsection does not make a person a resident of North Carolina for any other purpose.

(c) In addition, a person sponsored under this subsection who is lawfully admitted to the United States is eligible for the State resident community college tuition rate. For purposes of this subsection, a North Carolina nonprofit entity is a charitable or religious corporation as defined in G.S. 55A-1-40 that is incorporated in North Carolina and that is exempt from taxation under section 501(c)(3) of the Internal Revenue Code, or a civic league incorporated in North Carolina under Chapter 55A of the General Statutes that is exempt from taxation under section 501(c)(4) of the Internal Revenue Code. A nonresident of the United States is sponsored by a North Carolina nonprofit entity if the student resides in North Carolina while attending the community college and the North Carolina nonprofit entity provides a signed affidavit to the community college verifying that the entity accepts financial responsibility for the student's tuition and any other required educational fees. Any North Carolina nonprofit entity that sponsors a nonresident of the United States under this subsection may sponsor no more than five nonresident students annually under this subsection. This subsection does not make a person a resident of North Carolina for any other purpose.

(d) A community college may add the cost of textbooks purchased at the college's bookstore to the tuition rates established pursuant to subsection (a) of this section for all purposes associated with billing the armed services for the enrollment of members of the armed services, as defined in G.S. 116-143.3, if the student's branch of the armed services permits the addition of

textbooks to tuition costs in its tuition assistance program. The college may retain the funds attributable to the cost of the textbooks.

(e) A United States citizen shall be eligible to receive the State resident community college tuition rate for the school year immediately following the student's graduation from high school if all of the following conditions are met:

- (1) The individual satisfied the qualifications for assignment to a public school, as provided in G.S. 115C-366.
- (2) The individual was enrolled in a North Carolina public school unit for the entirety of the final school year before receiving a high school diploma from the public school unit.
- (3) The individual was unable, due to lack of evidence, to establish residency for tuition purposes through the centralized residency determination process administered by the State Education Assistance Authority. (1963, c. 448, s. 23; 1979, c. 462, s. 2; c. 896, s. 13; 1979, 2nd Sess., c. 1130, s. 1; 1981, c. 157, s. 4; 1983 (Reg. Sess., 1984), c. 1034, s. 58; 1989, c. 752, s. 85; 1991 (Reg. Sess., 1992), c. 1044, s. 25(a); 1993, c. 561, s. 50(a); 1996, 2nd Ex. Sess., c. 18, s. 17.1(a); 2000-67, s. 9.8; 2003-284, ss. 8.16(b), 8.16A(a); 2010-31, s. 8.4(b); 2011-145, s. 8.12(d); 2011-183, s. 80; 2011-184, s. 1; 2016-94, s. 10.4(b); 2021-133, s. 1.)